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AUTHOR Steinmiller, Robert C.; Steinmiller, Georgine G.
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ABSTRACT

Arkansas supports a statewide network of academic alliances in the humanities. Academic alliances are collaborative groups of school and college teachers in the same discipline, established to improve teaching and learning, promote ongoing professional development, and foster lasting professional relationships. Staff of regional educational cooperatives and a statewide project director engage in the following activities: (1) providing technical assistance, support services, and planning to local alliance; and (2) organizing new alliances and aggressively publicizing alliance activities. However, each alliance is a community of inquiry at the local level, whose participants determine the direction and success of their effort. In 1992, Arkansas had 20 established and 10 budding humanities alliances, located in all regions of the state and in both urban and rural areas. A statewide database contained 1,975 alliance members and other interested humanities scholars. Individual alliances in foreign languages, language arts, performing arts, social studies, and whole language are described. (SV)

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Robert C. Steinmiller, Ph.D.
Henderson State University
Arkadelphia, Arkansas

Georgine G. Steinmiller, Ph.D.
Henderson State University
Arkadelphia, Arkansas

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# ACADEMIC ALLIANCES IN HUMANITIES

## DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM

Arkansas supports a statewide academic alliances network in the humanities. Academic alliances are faculty collaboratives established by school and college teachers in the same discipline to promote ongoing professional development. As local groups of professionals, alliances meet regularly to work toward common objectives. Continued development of the Arkansas network of humanities alliances has these objectives: (1) to strengthen teaching at all levels of the education system in the humanities disciplines; (2) to improve learning in these disciplines; (3) to foster lasting professional relationships at the local level between school and college faculty in the humanities, and (4) to provide ongoing support for established humanities alliances.

Alliances in specific humanities disciplines have been established in five regions of Arkansas: Central Arkansas, The Northeast and Northwest, the Southeast and Southwest. Thus the rural needs of the State of Arkansas are addressed. New alliances build on the work begun in 1990; the Arkansas Network of Academic Alliances has established sixty alliances including math and science since March 1990, including 20 humanities alliances (10 from 1991, 10 new in 1992 and 10 are in the budding stage). The Humanities Coordinator has established a pace of ten new alliances a year and maintaining ten from the past year; this should be reasonable to expect to be continued in 1993.

Alliances have been established in Arkansas where the presence of regional educational cooperatives have expressed interest in and support for the academic alliances concept. Senior staff of these cooperatives have participated in planning activities and alliance workshops have taken place. Funding supported these activities: (1) regional workshops for humanities faculty to create new alliances; (2) support for teacher participants recruited into new alliances during the project year; (3) technical assistance and support services for these newly-created alliances.

The principal project activity is continued support of a statewide humanities alliances project director. This person facilitates the development of local alliances by conducting additional faculty surveys, organizing workshops and conferences, providing ongoing technical support to newly-organized alliance and improving public awareness of humanities alliances through newsletters and other

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methods of communication. The humanities alliances coordinator is a half-time staff person, housed at Henderson State University, with administrative support from Henderson State University, financial and technical assistance from the project advisor at the Arkansas Department of Higher Education. Henderson provides in-kind services in the form of an on-campus office, half-time clerical support and related administrative assistance. Dr. Robert Steinmiller, Director of Retention and assistant professor of English and speech facilitates the development of local alliances by means presented above.

Project Activities Proposed for the 1993: The humanities project director for the Arkansas Network of Academic Alliances will accomplish the objectives through continuation of the following activities:

1. Organize regional workshops and provide technical assistance to establish new humanities alliances and maintain established alliances.
2. Attend, and provide follow-up and logistical support for meetings of both existing and new local alliances and projects which meet goals identified in this proposal.
3. Continue operation and expansion of a comprehensive statewide database of alliances and alliance members. (This database serves as the distribution list for an alliances newsletter as well as individual alliance meeting announcements.)
4. Publication and distribution of an alliance newsletter to communicate with alliance members and potential participants; the newsletter is funded by another source, but the humanities coordinator would be co-editor of this publication, which also would be used to disseminate information on humanities alliance activities to education policy-makers and to humanities scholars not yet involved in alliances.
5. Contact Chambers of Commerce, business and industry, and professional societies, to become involved in humanities alliances in their local areas.
6. Conduct team inservice for local alliances
7. Provide follow-up and logistical support for such community meetings as requested by the local alliance
8. Increase efforts to identify schools, school districts and institutions of higher education with students or teachers from under-represented or under-served populations. Past project activities have included participation by teachers from under-served or under-represented groups, but representation from these groups remains low. Special emphasis will be placed upon alliances in the Delta region. The director of the Teach for America program has expressed interest in becoming involved in the alliance movement.
9. Again, attend professional meetings of humanities groups, especially the November meetings in Little Rock of the Area Education Association.

Major project activities focus on continued recruitment of additional alliance participants in the five regions of Arkansas. Related efforts are made to continue improvement of the visibility of school-college collaboration as an integral part of educational reform in Arkansas. This includes expansion of the project to additional educational cooperative service areas, to other school districts not currently served, and to colleges and universities whose faculty have not yet been involved in alliance projects.

The yearly project culminates with a statewide alliances meeting. All alliance members from across the state are invited to attend this meeting. The purpose of this meeting is two fold. First, successful alliance projects from the year are showcased with time provided for discussion between the alliances. The second purpose is to present concepts building are begun at the statewide leaders meeting conducted earlier in the year. In 1992, Dr. Bo Thomas conducted a workshop on team building that made use of research that he and his colleague Dr. Robert Fisher have conducted.

## Humanities Content

The Humanities disciplines are central to the concept of a statewide alliance network in Arkansas. Each alliance is discipline-specific, with members drawn from local schools and colleges. Project activities are designed to promote the creation of these alliances and provide appropriate technical assistance. The agenda and activities of each local alliance can be expected to focus their attention on issues related to teaching and learning in these disciplines.

A number of successful humanities alliances now exist in Arkansas and are closely related to the project. The Southwest Arkansas Foreign Language Alliance, based at Southern Arkansas University in Magnolia and the Western Arkansas Foreign Language Alliance, based at Westark Community College in Fort Smith are good examples of how alliances are formed and work for the benefit of humanities scholars. At the University of Arkansas at Monticello, the history academic alliance also demonstrates the strength and vitality of the alliance concept. This alliance is widely recognized as one of the strongest and most successful alliances in the United States.

## Principal scholars

A large diverse population of scholars is providing individual energy, effort and interest to give direction to the project. The data base includes 1975 names of persons in humanities, math and science, The review of alliances give an indication of the role and scope of humanities scholars in the project.

Project planning has involved a wide range of persons at national, state and local levels, many of whom are humanities professionals: Dr. Paula Bagasao, Director of the National Project in Support of Academic Alliances of the American Association for Higher Education

who provided planning guidance and technical assistance on-site, in Arkansas; Dr. Jane Landers, Director of the national History Teaching Alliance based at the University of Florida, Dr. Ellen Silber, director of the national Clearinghouse on Language and Linguistics who met with the project advisor and two of the foreign languages alliances in Arkansas; Professor Clara Krug of Georgia Southern University, one of the early organizers of the foreign languages alliance networks in that state.

At the state level, the Arkansas Network of Academic Alliances is a joint project of the State Boards of Education and Higher Education, with the direct involvement and support of Governor Clinton's education adviser. Dr. Burton Elliott, Director of the state Department of Education, and Dr. Diane Gilleland, Director of the state Department of Higher Education, have committed staff and financial resources to this project.

The review of local alliances later indicates the variety of persons involved in academic alliances. These humanities scholars and teachers provide guidance and direction to the project. Their needs and interests help determine the agenda for the project director; statewide activities involve these humanities teachers in planning sessions, evaluation of project actions and requests for guidance on future directions.

## Audience Served by this Project

All Arkansas school and college humanities faculty comprise the target audience for this project. In addition, direct and indirect beneficiaries of project activities include the students of alliance participants and their professional colleagues. Other parties who will be served include those concerned about professional development for humanities scholars and teachers at all levels of the education systems; administrators, board members and other humanists.

An important by-product of alliance-building is greater visibility for the humanities in the local community as business leaders, parents and public officials become aware of this collaboration. Nonetheless, the chief beneficiaries of academic alliances are those who join in these endeavors. Alliances are "communities of inquiry" at the local level whose participants determine the direction and success of this effort. The statewide network project is designed as a closely-related set of activities to facilitate creation and maintenance of these professional relationships.

The target audience participates in the planning of this project. The grassroots nature of alliances presumes that alliances set goals and objectives, form a steering committee, maintain membership and provide a timeline and calendar for events. Empowerment of educators and scholars and mutual benefit of school/college teambuilding are essential to planning for the project.

## Project Publicity

The Arkansas Network of Academic Alliances is a high-visibility activity because of the sponsorship of the two state education boards and the interest of Governor Clinton. Publicity on project activities has come through a regular newsletter and alliance directory, press releases when appropriate, recruiting surveys in untapped areas of the state, and from participation of project staff in professional meetings. As one of only three states building a statewide network of faculty collaboratives (New Jersey and Tennessee), project staff have been advisers to other states, reviewed alliance grant proposals to a national foundation, and served as panelists at the American Association for Higher Education national conference on collaboration in 1991 and Alliance Advocates session at the 1992 conference. All of these activities provide visibility and publicity for Arkansas alliance building.

## Evaluation Plan for Project Performance

Evaluation of the humanities academic alliances project focuses on achievement of project goals. Since the alliance project has specific numeric goals in terms of alliances created, participants recruited, and assistance provided to local groups, evaluation will be based on these objectives and the activities undertaken to attain them.

The project anticipates creation of ten new humanities alliances in Arkansas during the grant period. To evaluate performance, AHC will be provided with the member, locations and leaders of each alliance, the member of alliance participants, and a description of alliance activities at each location. Regular updates will assess progress toward the alliance creation goal. Evaluation measures will include the number and humanities discipline of project participants, teacher survey results and workshop attendance rosters. Related activities such as the alliance newsletter, mailings and requests for information, are be documented in regular project reports to the funding agency.

The project component related to financial assistance for local alliances are evaluated in two ways. First, recipients and funded activities are identified in regular reports. Further evaluation include review of each local alliance's membership and activities: humanities teachers recruited into the alliance, meetings held, and projects undertaken by the assisted local alliance.

The project advisor consults with the project director of humanities and the coordinator of math and science alliances also housed at Henderson State University to assure continuity of effort; both administrators fall under the supervision of the Academic Vice President of Henderson State University. Evaluation of the director includes regular contact with those involved in project activities, attendance at workshops or other meetings, review of project calendars and of project-related expenditures, and regular meetings between the director and the advisor.

## Evaluation Committee

The project evaluation committee is composed of Dr. John Short, University of Arkansas at Monticello; Professor Pat Roach, Arkansas Tech University; Professor Gisele Souter, Southern Arkansas University; and one member each from the State Boards of Education and Higher Education. General oversight of the Alliances Network project has been exercised by the Joint Liaison Committee of the two state education boards, a working group which meets quarterly. For purposes of this project, Dr. H.D. Luck, Chair of the State Board of Higher Education, and Ms Elaine Scott, Member of the State Board of Education, have served as the designated members from the two boards to evaluate the project.

## Responsibilities

Funds and fund expenditures are disbursed and accounted for in compliance with state auditing procedures. The project director is responsible for organization of project activities. Regular written reports are made to the director by the network coordinator for humanities alliances. Regular reports are also made to the Joint Liaison Committee of the State Boards of Education and Higher Education.

## REVIEW OF ALLIANCES BY ALLIANCE

### FOREIGN LANGUAGE ALLIANCES

LANGULLA AREA LANGUAGE ALLIANCE (LALA): Tom and Janette Arnhardt, teachers at Forrest City High School and East Arkansas Community College, were catalysts for this alliance that touches on the Arkansas rural delta areas. They benefitted from the Leaders' Meeting as they prepared for a general interest meeting October 20, 1992, following a steering committee meeting in the spring of 1992. Teachers of French, Spanish, and Japanese were present. This alliance represented collaboration with the Arkansas Department of Education, the Great Rivers Educational Cooperative, faculty from Forrest City High School, East Arkansas Community College, and schools in Crittenden, West Memphis, Lee, Monroe, Phillips, and St. Francis counties. This also includes Teach for America" participants, a national teacher corps program that is housed on the Phillips Community College campus.

SOUTH ARKANSAS FOREIGN LANGUAGE ALLIANCE (SAFLA): Giselle Souter, Professor of Foreign Language at Southern Arkansas University has continued to be a guiding light for a model academic alliance. She has an active steering committee that often meets in members' homes with potluck meals sharing foreign dishes and recipes. Workshops in 1992 included cooperative learning. A big project evolved from interest of several teachers who organized a Southwest Arkansas foreign language festival.

WEST ARKANSAS FOREIGN LANGUAGE ALLIANCE (WAFLA): The West Arkansas Foreign Language Alliance has held a number of alliance sessions

since forming on December 4, 1990. Nancy Zechiedrich, a foreign language teacher brought twenty-six participants together on the Westark Community College campus to organize WAFLA. A steering committee met in advance of alliance sessions to assure quality meetings. This alliance was highlighted at the 1991 Grand Alliance meeting with the student-led foreign dance troop. The alliance has had meetings where language educators met together in language specific groups to work on learning activities and games that could be used in the classroom. They have met in potluck lunch meetings featuring a variety of French, German, Latin, and Spanish foods.

## LANGUAGE ARTS ALLIANCES

WESTARK ENGLISH ALLIANCE: Tom Walton, English teacher at Westark Community College, attended the fall 1992 leaders' meeting to prepare for the establishment of this alliance. They have formed and since created a newsletter Motivate to unite their membership to its membership. Interest in alliances was fostered by the Branch Area Educational Cooperative in 1991.

WESTARK JOURNALISM ALLIANCE: This is an alliance in the forming stage and has evolved as an outgrowth of the Westark English Alliance.

WEST ARKANSAS SPEECH ALLIANCE: Alliances were introduced at the annual Arkansas Speech Communication Association. Speech teachers from Fort Smith Northside High School, Southside High School and Westark Community College are working together to form an alliance. They are drawing from the success of the Westark English Alliance.

## PERFORMING ARTS ALLIANCES

ALLIANCE FOR THE VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS (AVPA): Thirteen members from the DeQueen-Mena Educational Cooperative service area met and this focus group reassembled to elect officers, plan future meetings and discuss projects. A logo for future materials and publicity was designed, and Professor Jerry Poole demonstrated watercolor use. The alliance sponsored a performance and visual display program during the August co-op in-service meeting. Charlotte Cobb, chair of the alliance, believes the performing arts are important teaching aides in academic subject areas. AVPA was a resource for other teachers to use this approach.

BRADFORD ART ALLIANCE: This interest group evolved from the Mills Area Social Science alliance. School faculty saw the benefit of college collaboration extend to the art discipline.

EL DORADO MUSIC ALLIANCE: Francis Kuykendall, Inservice Coordinator in El Dorado, hosted an interest meeting in alliances on August 26, 1992 inservice for the El Dorado Schools. From this, a new alliance came into existence; Elaine Allen, coordinator of music in the district, expressed interest in alliances and attended the leaders meeting on September 11 and planned a general interest

meeting including faculty from South Arkansas Community College, Barton Middle school, Arkansas High School, Texarkana Community College, Magnolia High School, Fairview High School and Southern Arkansas University.

## SOCIAL STUDIES ALLIANCES

ARKANSAS GEOGRAPHIC ALLIANCE: Jerry Hansen at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock has led the Arkansas Geographic Alliance as an independent and viable alliance that is a model for what can be done with alliances. This alliance conducted the Arkansas Geographic Alliance 1992 summer institute on the campus of Ouachita Baptist University, utilizing university faculty from Fayetteville and Conway as well as school faculty from Arkadelphia. They also sponsored the 1992 geography essay contest for fifth through seventh grade students, as well as the December National Geographic Awareness Week.

CENTRAL ARKANSAS SOCIAL SCIENCE ALLIANCE: Dr. Selma Hobby and Rosemary Brewer are leaders working to establish a social science alliance connecting Little Rock schools and the University of Arkansas in Little Rock.

HOPE AREA SOCIAL SCIENCE ALLIANCE Janice Harrison has expressed interest in developing this alliance as an outgrowth of the South Arkansas Social Science Alliances; she was a presenter at the Woodward Institute in 1992.

MILLS AREA SOCIAL SCIENCE ALLIANCE: This alliance came into formation after a meeting at Harding University conducted by the Wilber Mills Cooperative on September 28, 1992 that included social studies faculty and administrators from ASU/Beebe, Harding University, Harding Academy and public schools. Dr. Pat Roach, of Arkansas Tech provided support, and three members attended the leadership meeting.

PARIS AREA SOCIAL SCIENCE ALLIANCE: Middle school interest is being cultivated by this alliance. The alliance created a four meeting plan that includes university faculty from liberal arts and education and the public schools, with particular focus on Paris middle school teachers due to their centrality in social studies educational reform in the state. Dr. Pat Roach is a well respected source of state-wide support in the social sciences and president of the Arkansas Council on Social Studies.

SOUTH ARKANSAS SOCIAL SCIENCE ALLIANCE (SASSA): This alliance brought faculty kindergarten to college together to help plan the Arkansas Council on Social Studies regional meeting in 1992. The alliance also presented an Evening in Russia meeting with a student guest speaker regarding an exchange program, as well as a university faculty member who was a guest scholar invited to Russia. This alliance had members active in the 1992 C. Vann Woodward Institute.

SOUTHWEST ARKANSAS SOCIAL STUDIES ALLIANCE (SWASSA): This alliance took form in 1992 under the direction of Dr. Mary Hamilton of Southern Arkansas University. They conducted a regional meeting that brought in presenters from the Arkansas Historical Restoration for the benefit of school teachers in the region.

SOUTHEAST ARKANSAS HISTORY TEACHING ALLIANCE (SEAHTA): Dr. John Short, Professor at The University of Arkansas at Montecello, has been a model of alliance leadership. His alliance has taken teachers to West Africa, Egypt and Israel. To celebrate Columbus, the alliance conducted an October conference.

WOODWARD INSTITUTE ALLIANCE: This institute under the direction of Dr. John Graves, Henderson State University, evolved into an alliance. The institute was supported by publicity by the state alliance network, and drew participants form other alliances; this networking proved to be mutually beneficial.

## WHOLE LANGUAGE ALLIANCES

ARKANSANS FOR WHOLE LANGUAGE - STUTTGART

Twenty-five teachers gathered together to model after other alliances presented at the Arkansas State Reading Council state meeting. They are involved in changing teaching basal reading to whole language; their concern is to also be accountable for testing.

CENTRAL ARKANSAS ALLIANCE FOR WHOLE LITERACY Diane Taylor, Little Rock Public Schools, and Linda Dorn, University of Arkansas at Little Rock, after attending a leadership meeting, presented a detailed four page plan including goals, time lines, and philosophy. They are pursuing a literacy approach that incorporates a broader scholarly base as an outgrowth of whole language concepts. Our Academic Alliances Network supportive of the philosophical exploration of whole language.

CREATIVE LEARNING, AN ARKANSAS WHOLE LANGUAGE ALLIANCE

Rita Briner, Nevada Elementary, worked individual leaders training to assist in establishing a new alliance in the Hope area. The meeting was productive and resulted in an initial meeting of university faculty from Southern Arkansas University and school teachers from the surrounding counties.

NORTHWEST ARKANSAS WHOLE LANGUAGE ALLIANCE: This has been a very active and large alliance in Springdale Arkansas that saw 140 persons attend the initial meeting. Faculty from the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville and Martha Simpson of Happy Hollow School have made great use of alliance support in 1992. Alliances supported a major model program that brought to the Springdale area teacher from the Perryville School District.

Northwest Arkansas Alliances: Westark Community College, Arkansas Tech, and Western Arkansas Educational School Cooperative in cooperation with the Arkansas Network of Academic Alliances ran a workshop that generated interest in the following alliances: Media Library Alliance, Art Alliance, Language Arts/English Alliances (this is now Westark English Alliance); Social Studies/History Alliance; Foreign Language Alliance (in addition to Westark Foreign Language Alliance; Music Alliance; Business Alliance; Counseling Alliance; Special Education Alliance; and a Vocational Alliance.

## OTHER OUTCOMES OF PROJECT

DATA BASE: A major database with 1975 names is being maintained to facilitate communication with alliance members.

GRAND ALLIANCE MEETING: A statewide assembly of alliance members is conducted to share alliance concepts and provide continuing support by the alliance leaders.

LEADERS MEETING: These are excellent opportunities to bring potential humanities contacts in touch with established alliance leaders. Yearly goals and projects are established; leadership skills are developed.

NEWSLETTER: Alliance newsletters are published and distributed quarterly. Recipients include all school and college faculty who have joined Arkansas alliances as well as all survey respondents. The September 1992 newsletter incorporated response cards for members to check the information that is in the Arkansas Network of Academic Alliance data base.

NOVEMBER MEETINGS OF THE ARKANSAS EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION: The Humanities project director is present in Little Rock during the November period when educational meetings are traditionally held.

RESOURCE BOOK This booklet of information is an essential tool for members and leaders to access information on alliances.

## Conclusion

This project has been a positive force in uniting higher education and school faculties. In rural settings, resources are made available to school teachers and networks are formed.